NOVA SCOTIA HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

STATEMENT OF MANDATE (March 30, 2012)

2012-2013

Table of Contents

1. Message from the Minister and CEO 3
2. Mandate 5
3. Government Priorities..... 8
4. Performance Measures 9
5. Budget Context 13

1. Message from the Minister and the Director and CEO

We are pleased to present the 2012-2013 Statement of Mandate for the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission (NSHRC). This plan sets out the NSHRC's strategic direction for the fiscal year.

The NSHRC's vision is to help build inclusive communities and to protect and promote human rights in Nova Scotia. An effective relationship with both government and the public will enable the NSHRC to fulfil its dual mandate: human rights dispute resolution, and eliminating barriers to full participation in society through education, training and consultation, including policy advice.

In the 2012-2013 fiscal year, the NSHRC will continue to enhance its dispute resolution process. Beginning January 1, 2012 productive changes were made to the system by adding a new process called a Resolution Conference. The NSHRC has already seen positive results from these changes including dramatically improved timeliness, flexibility and transparency of the process, all of which benefit the citizens of Nova Scotia. The NSHRC will build on these achievements into the future. The NSHRC has already received favourable feedback regarding these changes and it will seek to raise its profile and become a leader and model for other jurisdictions.

The NSHRC recognizes the importance of preventing discrimination and continues to promote and provide human rights education and training by identifying issues, targeting communities of all nature and schools and providing information on human rights. The NSHRC will continue to provide ongoing assistance and advice to organizations and business by exploring diversity in the workplace, providing education and assisting in the prevention of discriminatory practices. The NSHRC believes that inclusiveness improves the general health and well being of all Nova Scotians and improves all of our economic prospects for the future.

The NSHRC will continue to make the best possible use of its human and financial resources in support of government's priority of getting back to balance and living within our means.

The NSHRC is a dynamic organization which is proud of its leadership role in the protection and promotion of human rights. We are committed to working with all Nova Scotians to assist them to participate in and contribute to a vibrant, prosperous and diverse community.

The NSHRC is pleased to announce that it has added to its lead team with the appointment of a new Commission Chair. Additionally a new Director and CEO has been named and three new Commissioners have been appointed to the Board. The expertise and commitment to human rights delivered by these individuals will bring strong and effective advocacy of human rights issues and the mandate of the Commission in the promotion and protection of human rights for all citizens of Nova Scotia.

Honourable Ross Landry
Minister Responsible for the
Nova Scotia *Human Rights Act*

David Shannon
Director and CEO
Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission

2. Mandate

The NSHRC has a unique role within Nova Scotia. It is an independent government agency charged with administering the Nova Scotia *Human Rights Act*, a provincial statute created in 1969, with the most recent amendments in July 2009. The NSHRC is mandated by the Act to help build inclusive communities and protect human rights in Nova Scotia.

The specific duties of the NSHRC are set out in the Act as follows:

- administer and enforce the provisions of this Act;
- develop a program of public information and education in the field of human rights to forward the principle that every person is free and equal in dignity and rights without regard to race, religion, creed, colour, ethnic or national origin, sex, gender or sexual orientation;
- conduct research and encourage research by universities and other bodies in the general field of human rights;
- advise and assist government departments and co-ordinate their activities as far as these activities concern human rights;
- advise the government on suggestions, recommendations and requests made by private organizations and individuals;
- co-operate with and assist any person, organization or body concerned with human rights, inside or outside the province;
- report as required by the Minister on the business and activities of the Commission;
- consider, investigate or administer any matter or activity referred to the Commission by the Governor in Council or the Minister.

Vision

The NSHRC is committed to actively engage and work with all Nova Scotians and our diverse communities to effectively:

- advance equity and dignity,
- foster positive and respectful relations, and
- protect human rights.

The NSHRC believes in and is committed to:

- restorative processes
- respectful and productive relationships
- inclusivity
- service excellence
- continuous learning through research and innovation
- transparency

Strategic Goals

The NSHRC has identified the following strategic Goals for the 2012-2013 year:

1. **Identify, Address and Operationalize Priority Human Rights Issues**

   The NSHRC will:

   a. outline a process and criteria for identifying priorities, identify the most important/strategic human rights issues in order to guide the Commission in its work and gain agreement to proceed from the Commissioners;

   b. develop a framework for addressing issues that mitigates all potential for harm and develops restorative responses;

   c. implement systems and structures and put resources in place to address priority issues and furthermore support community capacity to address these issues;

   d. strengthen its capability to respond quickly to critical community situations independent of the Commission's complaint process.

2. **Fully Integrate Restorative Approaches Into the Commission's Work**

   The NSHRC will:

   a. implement a new dispute resolution process and take advantage of the opportunities it provides to strengthen communication, build awareness and raise the profile of the Commission and its restorative approaches;

   b. fully incorporate restorative processes in all that we do by developing a menu of restorative processes and use consistent principles, approaches and experiences.

3. **Advance Dialogue and Human Rights Practices**

   The NSHRC will:

   a. profile and build upon advancements in human rights work through such strategies as contributing to the national conversation surrounding human rights issues and, in particular, will assess and report on our experience with the new dispute resolution process and furthermore will prepare to capitalize on the 50 year anniversary of the Commission (2017);

b. strengthen government and mediarelations;

c. encourage the adoption of best human rights practices by adopting the following strategies:
   i. strengthen connections with all stakeholders such as professionals, volunteers, communities, businesses and organizations involved in human rights work in order to foster a stronger vision, exchange effective approaches and develop new ideas;
   ii. provide tools, resources, and potentially on-line training, including restorative training for Boards of Inquiry;
   iii. contribute to a stronger national partnership of Commissions, particularly those Commissions that are sized similarly to that of Nova Scotia;

d. enhance mechanisms to give voice to people with protected characteristics;

e. develop and implement a communications strategy.

3. Government Priorities (as appropriate for an independent agency)

Although it is an independent agency with a clearly defined statutory mandate, the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission helps the government to achieve its three priorities in the following ways:

Priority 1 - Provide better healthcare for you and your family

The Commission's revamped dispute resolution processes will dramatically reduce wait times for access to addressing human rights issues. More timely resolution of outstanding human rights issues will allow participants to worry less about the status of their particular matters and move on with their lives. The Commission will also help to ensure healthcare services are provided fairly and equitably, without regard to personal characteristics of the patient. The NSHRC will also promote respect for human rights in the workplaces of healthcare workers so that better healthcare can be delivered to patients. A community that promotes the dignity, participation and rich diversity of all members is a healthy community. It is the mandate of the NSHRC to fulfill this goal in order in order to enhance the wellness of all Nova Scotians.

Priority 2 -Create good jobs and grow the economy

Nearly 80 percent of Commission dispute resolution efforts are related to employment. The Commission will continue to work towards fostering employer/employee relations and achieving a diverse and inclusive work force across Nova Scotia, which means a larger, more qualified workforce pool. Eliminating discrimination will allow individuals and groups who are historically under-represented in the workforce to achieve gainful employment become properly represented.

Respect for human rights creates a better workplace culture, creating more productive employees which, in turn, generates economic growth.

Priority 3 -Get back to balance and ensure government lives within its means

The Commission will make the most effective use of its financial and human resources. The Commission's streamlined dispute resolution processes will allow respondents, including government departments and agencies, to efficiently participate in resolution activities.

The Commission will continue to forego charging other government departments for providing human rights education and training on the basis that cross-departmental invoicing ultimately draws from the same pool of taxpayers' money and it is desirable to avoid the associated administrative expenses.

4. Performance Measures

Address Priority Human Rights Issues					
OUTCOME	**MEASURE**	**DATA Base Year 2011-2012**	**TARGET March 2013**	**TRENDS**	**STRATEGIC ACTIONS**
Priority human rights issues have been identified, approval obtained from Commissioners and priorities operationalized	Report created identifying all priority issues	N/A	2 mos	SEE NOTE # 1	Create an internal multi-year strategic plan which will identify priority human rights issues and implementation time lines
	Report tabled for Commissioners and approval obtained	N/A	4 mos	SEE NOTE # 1	Report to Commissioners and seek approval
	Status update with respect to each priority identified	N/A	12 mos	SEE NOTE # 1	• Assign managers and staff to each priority • Identify appropriate partners and stakeholders for each priority

Integrate Restorative Approaches					
OUTCOME	**MEASURE**	**DATA Base Year 2011-2012**	**TARGET March 2013**	**TRENDS**	**STRATEGIC ACTIONS**
Strengthen communication, build awareness and raise the profile of the Commission and its restorative approaches	Report created identifying communication initiatives	N/A	4 mos	SEE NOTE # 1	• Identify each of the Commission's strategic priorities • Develop procedures to ensure that major dispute resolution initiatives carry with them a communications component that highlight the restorative/collaborative processes
	Report tabled for Commissioners and approval obtained	N/A	4 mos	SEE NOTE # 1	Report to Commissioners and seek approval
	Status update with respect to each communication initiative	N/A	12 mos	SEE NOTE # 1	Assign managers and staff to each communication initiative

Fully incorporate restorative processes where appropriate	completion of menu of processes		6 mos	SEE NOTE # 1	• Inventory the services/projects delivered by the Commission in order to enhance restorative approaches

Advance Dialogue and Human Rights Practices					
OUTCOME	**MEASURE**	**DATA Base Year 2011-2012**	**TARGET March 2013**	**TRENDS**	**STRATEGIC ACTIONS**
Position NSHRC at the cutting edge of best human rights practices	Report on new advancements created or adopted by NSHRC	N/A	12 mos	SEE NOTE # 1	• Share/receive information regarding best practices with other commissions • Seek amendments to the NS *Human Rights Act* to support restorative processes • Capture innovative Commission work via polling, academic papers and conferences
Positive government and media relations		N/A	12 mos	SEE NOTE # 1	• Create and implement a government relations plan • Create list of communications officers from other governmental departments who work closely with the NSHRC and establish contact
Operationalize communications strategy		N/A	12 mos	SEE NOTE # 1	• Appoint a communications officer • Create and implement a communications plan

***N/A - Not available**

NOTE # 1 - All Strategic Goals and resulting Outcomes are new as of January, 2012 and therefore Trends are not available at this time.

5. Budget Context and Budget

Budget Context

Budget

Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission			
	2011-2012 Estimate ($ thousands)	2011-2012 Forecast ($ thousands)	2012-2013 Estimate ($ thousands)
Gross Departmental Expenses:	2,166	2,166	2,143